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THE "TWO NATURES" AND RECENT CHRISTOLOGICAL SPECULATION

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT JESUS THE ONLY REAL JESUS

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In a former article¹ we have pointed out that the doctrine of the "Two Natures" is the common presupposition of the whole body of the New Testament writings—a presupposition which is everywhere built upon, and which comes to clear enunciation wherever occasion calls for it. The literature gathered into the New Testament is not only the earliest Christian literature which has come down to us, but goes back to within twenty years or so of the death of Christ; and since it did not create but reflects the faith it expresses, it must be allowed to possess a retrospective significance in its unbroken testimony to the belief of Christians. What the whole Christian community is found to be resting in, with complete assurance, as the truth respecting the person of its founder in, say, A.D. 50—a time when a large number of his personal followers were doubtless still living, and certainly the tradition of which they were bearers (cf. Luke 1:2) cannot have become obscured—can scarcely fail to have been the aboriginal belief of the Christian body. Nevertheless, a determined effort is still made to discover an "earlier," "more primitive," "simpler" view of the person of Christ behind the oldest attested doctrine. There is confessedly no "direct" evidence of the existence of any such "earlier," "more primitive," "simpler" view. "Of the religion of the earliest Jewish-Christian community," says Johannes Weiss, as he enters upon the exposition of "the faith of the primitive community,"² "we have no *direct* witnesses; for we can, today, no longer consider the Epistles of Peter and James genuine works of the primitive apostles"—largely, it needs to be remembered, because they do not contain the "more primitive" Christology which it is assumed

¹ *The American Journal of Theology*, July, 1911, pp. 337 ff.

² *Christus*, usw., 7.

these "primitive apostles" must have cherished. But it is thought that by means of indirect evidence, the existence in the first age of Christianity of an earlier view of Christ than any which has found record in the New Testament may be established. The whole mass of expressions of which the New Testament writers make use in speaking of Christ, is subjected to a searching scrutiny with a view to discovering among them, if possible, "survivals" of an "earlier" mode of thinking of Christ. Weiss accordingly continues:

For this pre-Pauline epoch also we are first of all directed to the letters of Paul. He occasionally speaks of having received something from the primitive community (I Cor. 15:3 ff.). But more important still are the numerous elements of the oldest primitive-Christian conceptions which without expressly notifying the fact he carries along in his theology, and which betray themselves to the eye of the investigator as a universal-Christian stratum underlying the more Hellenistically colored specifically-Pauline doctrine. Similarly, all the other documents of the Apostolic and post-Apostolic age contain such old Christian traits, which point back to the standpoint of the oldest community. Thereto we reckon especially the discourses in the first part of Acts. Though they may have come from a later time, yet, precisely in their Christology, they contain very antique conceptions.

What is attempted, it will be seen, is on subjective grounds—there are, in the circumstances, none other available—to distinguish, among the New Testament deliverances concerning Christ, those which belong to the primitive age from those which belong to the age when the books were written. The whole New Testament is doubtless laid under contribution for this purpose, but the happy hunting-ground of the quest is found in the early chapters of the Acts and in the Synoptic Gospels.

It is not without the clearest justification that we have emphasized the purely subjective grounding of this quest. If we possessed a single Christian document earlier in date than those which constitute our New Testament, in which was taught the special Christology which it is proposed to extract from our New Testament as an earlier form of belief than that which the New Testament itself universally commends to us, there might be some excuse for gathering out of our New Testament books the sentences and forms of expression which seemed to fall particularly in with the

teachings of this earlier document and pronouncing them survivals of its earlier modes of thought. But in the absence of any such earlier document, what reason is there for pronouncing these forms of expression "survivals"? The touchstone by which their "earlier" character is determined, Weiss tells us, resides in "the searcher's eye." That is to say, shortly, in the critic's a-priori paradigms. The critic comes to his task with a settled conviction, a priori established, that Jesus was a mere man, and must have been thought of by his followers as a mere man; and sets himself to search out in the extant literature—which is informed by a contrary conviction—modes of expression which he can interpret as "survivals" of such an "earlier" point of view. Meanwhile, there is no evidence whatever that these modes of expression are "survivals," or that there ever existed in the Christian community an "earlier" view of the person of Christ than that given expression in the New Testament writings. Reinhold Seeberg has quite accurately expounded the state of the case when, speaking more particularly of Harnack's unfortunate attempt to distinguish in primitive Christianity an "adoptionist" and a "pneumatic" Christology, he says:³

Investigators, in my opinion, are as a rule misled by this—that they make the "historical Jesus" their starting-point by simple assumption, and treat all expressions which go beyond this as attributes added to him in gradual precipitation on the ground of faith in his resurrection. The historical starting-point is, however, in reality contained in three facts: (1) that Jesus in his earthly life manifested a superhuman self-consciousness; (2) that his disciples were convinced by him, *after* his resurrection, not precisely *by* it, that they had directly experienced and received proof of his divine nature; and (3) that they accordingly honored and proclaimed him as the heavenly Spirit-Lord. These facts are, in my opinion, indisputable, and from these facts as a starting-point—they are simply "given" and not deducible—the entire thought-development can be fully explained.

³ *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, I, 104. Seeberg, of course, only repeats in this what has been clearly pointed out from the beginning. Thus E. K. A. Riehm, *Der Lehrbegriff des Hebräerbriefes* (1867), 332, remarks: "That it is only on the basis of his well-known false preconception to the effect that the *original* Christian conception of the person of Christ was an Ebionitish one, that Schwegler refers the declarations as to the exaltation of the person of Christ to a mere effort, to a *tendency*, while he refers the declarations as to the likeness of Christ to men to the *tradition*, we note only in passing."

When the study of historical records is approached with a fixed assumption of an opposite point of view to their own as instrument of interpretation, it is not strange if their representations are replaced by a set of contradictory representations. But the "results" thus reached are not in any recognizable sense "historical." They are the product of wresting history in order to fill in a foregone conclusion of abstract thought.⁴

It should not pass without very particular notice that the forms of expression gathered from our New Testament books, out of which is to be fashioned an "earlier" Christology than that presupposed by this literature, do not lie on the face of the New Testament as alien fragments. It is not without significance that Johannes Weiss, after remarking that Paul occasionally puts forward statements as derived by him from "the primitive community," at once adds that, for the purpose of reconstructing the faith of this "earlier community" from Paul's writings, "survivals" in his writings not expressly notified as such are both more numerous and more important. In other words, our New Testament writers who have preserved for us the elements of this "earlier" Christology wholly different from their own and, indeed contradictory to it, have preserved them with the most engaging unconsciousness of their alien character: in point of fact, they have written down these contradictory sentences with no other

⁴ Cf. Albert Schweitzer's characterization of this method of criticism in an analogous field (*The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 330-31): "In order to find in Mark the life of Jesus of which it is in search, modern theology is obliged to read between the lines a whole host of things, and those often the most important, and then to foist them upon the text by means of a psychological conjecture. It is determined to find evidence in Mark of a development of Jesus. . . . Mark knows nothing of any development in Jesus. . . . Another hitherto self-evident point—the historical kernel which it has been customary to extract from the narratives—must be given up, until it is proved, if it is capable of proof, that we can and ought to distinguish between the kernel and the husk. . . . Whatever the results obtained by the aid of the historical kernel, the method pursued is the same: it is detached from the context and transformed into something different. 'It finally comes to this,' says Wrede, 'that each critic retains whatever portion of the traditional sayings can be fitted into his construction of the facts and his conception of historical possibility, and rejects the rest.' The psychological motivating and the psychological connection of the events and actions which are proposed to be found in Mark simply do not exist. That being so, no results whatever can be reached by the reworking of his narrative by means of an a-priori psychology."

thought than that they were the just expression of their own proper views; and they betray no sense of embarrassment whatever with respect to them. This is true even—or perhaps we should say, especially—of the extreme case of the record of Peter's christological utterances in the earlier chapters of the Book of Acts. It is quite clear that Luke is wholly unaware that he is recording views of his Lord which differ from his own, which, indeed, are in sharp conflict with his own and, to speak frankly, stultify his entire attitude toward his Lord, for the validation of which his whole great two-part work was written. We may well ask whether such unconscious *naïveté* can be attributed to such an alert writer as Luke shows himself to be. Or if with Johannes Weiss⁵ we deny these chapters to Luke and suppose the speeches of Peter "free compositions" of a later author, the *tour de force* which we attribute to this great nameless dramatist rises quite to the level of the miraculous. It is hardly worth while to ask similarly whether Paul, in his fervid expressions of reverence to Christ as "Lord," can be supposed with such simplicity to mix in with his own language, so vividly expressive of this reverence, other forms of speech standing in flat contradiction to all that he was proclaiming, merely because he found them in use in "the primitive community." Surely the Epistle to the Galatians does not encourage us to believe Paul to have been filled with such blind veneration for "the primitive community," that he would be likely to continue to repeat its language in devout subjection to the authority of its modes of statement, though it ran counter to his profoundest convictions and his most fervent religious feelings.

The general point we are endeavoring to make deserves some elaboration with special reference to the Synoptic Gospels. It is particularly behind their narrative that the traces of an earlier conception of the person of Christ than that presented by our whole New Testament—inclusive of these gospels—are supposed to be discoverable. It is frankly allowed, as we have seen, that the Gospels as they stand present to our view a divine Christ, an incarnated Son of God, who came to earth on a mission, and whose whole earthly life is only an episode in the existence of a Heavenly

⁵ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, I, 47-48; see the allusion above, p. 547.

Being. But it is immediately added that in the narrative put together from this standpoint, there are imbedded elements of an earlier tradition, to which Jesus was a mere man, bounded by all human limitations. And it is assumed to be precisely the task of criticism to identify and draw out these elements of earlier tradition, that we may recover from them the idea formed of Jesus by his real contemporaries and, therefore, presumably, the true conception of him before he was transformed by the reverent thought of his followers into an exalted Being, to be which he himself made no claim. We say nothing now of purely "literary criticism"—the attempt to ascertain the sources on which our gospels as literary compositions rest, and from which they draw their materials. For this "literary criticism" in no way advances the discovery of a "more primitive" Christology lying behind that presented by the authors of our gospels. It would have been a strange proceeding indeed had the authors of our gospels elected to draw their materials, by preference, from earlier documents presenting a totally different, or, rather, sharply contrasting conception of Jesus from that which they had in heart and mind to commend to their readers; and they are obviously wholly unaware of doing anything of the kind. Happily, we are delivered from the necessity of considering the possibility of such a literary phenomenon. It is no doubt impossible to reconstruct any of the sources which "have found their graves" in our gospels with full confidence, with respect either to the details of their contents or even to their general compass. But neither the "narrative source"—the so-called *Urmarkus*—which underlies all three of the Synoptics, nor the "discourses-source"—the so-called "Logia"—which underlies the common portions of Matthew and Luke not found also in Mark, on any rational theory of its compass and contents, differs in any respect in its christological point of view from that of the Gospels, so large a portion of which they constitute.⁶ We may remark in passing that this carries the evi-

⁶ We have already seen above (p. 358) Johannes Weiss incidentally noting the use in the "discourses-source" of the "Son of Man," of Christ: of course, the same use occurs in the *Urmarkus*, however it be reconstructed. But the general point is easily demonstrable in detail.

dence for the aboriginality in the Christian community of the two-natured conception of Christ back a literary generation behind the Synoptics themselves; and that surely must bring us to a time which can scarcely be thought to be wholly dominated by Paul's innovating influence. It is enough for us here to note, however, that "literary criticism" does not take us back to documents presenting a "pre-Pauline" Christology. If such a "pre-Pauline" Christology is to be found in the background of our gospels, much coarser methods of reaching it than "literary criticism" must be employed.

The absurd attempt of P. W. Schmiedel to reverse the conception of Christ transmitted to us by the Gospels, by insisting that, in the first instance, we must trust only such passages as are—or rather, as, when torn from their contexts, may be made to seem—inconsistent with the main purpose of the evangelists in writing their gospels, namely, to honor Christ, is only an unusually crass application of the method which from the beginning has been common to the whole body of those who, like him, are in search of evidence in the Gospels of the existence of a "more primitive" tradition than that which the Gospels themselves represent. The essence of this method is the attempt to discover in the gospel narrative elements in the delineation of Jesus which are inconsistent with the conception of Jesus which it is their purpose to convey; to which unassimilated elements of a different tradition, preference is at once given in point of both age and trustworthiness. This method is as freely in use, for instance, by Johannes Weiss, who seems to wish to separate himself from Schmiedel,⁷ as by

⁷ Or can Weiss not have Schmiedel in mind in writing as follows (*Jesus von Nazareth*, 1910, 93): "What mandate of the historical method, however, tells us that the interested parties [*die Betheiligten*] are to be distrusted under all circumstances? There no doubt still exist people to whom the declarations of a pious man are antecedently suspicious. We need not argue with them; they have been born a century and a half too late. They simply neglect a moral duty when they deny to those who differ with them the same bona fides they make claim to for themselves. The truly unprejudiced man will say: 'With reference to the nature of a personality we shall always reach ultimately a clearer notion along with those who have surrendered themselves to his influence than with those whom either hate has made blind, or who have simply taken no interest in him. It is possible to think the reverence shown him excessive and to draw back from many things his friends say of him: yet certain fundamental traits are here most surely to be found.'"

Schmiedel himself. Let us note how Weiss deals with the matter:⁸

The Christology of the evangelist himself [he is speaking of Mark] is very far advanced in the direction of the Johannine; there can be no doubt that Jesus is to him the Son of God, in the sense of a divine being with divine power and divine knowledge from the beginning on. Nothing is hidden from him: his own destiny, the denial, the betrayal, the fate of Jerusalem—he tells it all exactly beforehand. Nothing is impossible to him: the most marvelous healings, like the sudden cure of the withered hand, of leprosy, of blindness, are performed by him without any difficulty; he raises a dead person; he walks on the water, and feeds thousands with a few loaves; he makes the

⁸ *Jesus von Nazareth*, usw., 132–33. It is perhaps worth while to observe how Riehm, in a passage which has already been adverted to (*Der Lehrbegriff des Hebräerbriefes* [1887], 331–32), already deals with this sort of criticism as applied by Schwegler to the Epistle to the Hebrews: "The two kinds of expression, set side by side, stand in remarkable contrast. Now it is said that the Son as the effulgence of the glory of God possesses the fulness of God's essential glory, then again that like us he partakes of flesh and blood; now that he is eternal and unchangeable, then again that he is like us in all things; now he is exalted high above all men, and even above angels and set in an absolutely unique relation to God, then again he is placed on the level of men and set forth as standing in a human relation to God; there is no trait in the nature of God which is not found also in the nature of the Son, and yet it is only through severe conflicts of suffering that he struggles to attain the highest stage of moral-religious perfection; he upholds all things by the word of his power, and yet he is subjected to the cruelest sufferings and the death of the cross. With an eye on these contrasts it is easy to understand how Schwegler came to the contention (II, 388): 'We perceive still in the Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews the lack of harmony which belongs to the first beginnings; we meet everywhere with an unreconciled contradiction of the two constitutive elements of the person of Christ, the human and the divine in him, his subordination beneath the Father, and his co-ordination and consubstantiality with the Father. In spite of the visible effort which the author makes to bring the divine in Christ to its highest possible and most specific expression, there presses continually forward the traditional human conception of the person.' This contention is, however, thoroughly false. That it is only on the basis of his well-known false presupposition that the *original* Christian conception of the person of Christ was an Ebionitish one, that Schwegler refers the declarations of the exaltation of the person of Christ to a mere effort, to a *tendency*, while he refers the declarations of the likeness of Christ to men to the *tradition*, we note only in passing. But even apart from this, do these two kinds of declarations really stand in an unreconciled contradiction to one another? The author makes it very clear that in his own consciousness the conciliation of the two modes of conceiving Christ, as the Son of God and as true man, was fully carried out, when in 5:8 he expressly says that the sonship to God and the learning of obedience through suffering in no way (as might be thought) exclude one another. It is accordingly clear to him that Christ *on earth* could be God's Son, and true man *at the same time*; that he was both in *one person*."

fig tree wither—it is all related as if nothing else could be expected; we see in these accounts neither the bold faith to which all is possible nor the enthusiasm of one beside himself, nor natural intermediation; Jesus can do just anything. And therefore, to the evangelist, it is nothing singular that at his death the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent; and that he left the grave on the third day—all this follows altogether naturally and of itself from his Christology. But alongside of these stand other traits: his power rests on the Spirit, which was communicated to him at baptism; we see how this Spirit struggles with the spirits (1:25, 3:11, 5:6, 8, 9:25); his miraculous power is limited by unbelief (6:5), he must have faith himself and find faith in others if he is to help; his dominion over suffering and death has its limits; he trembles and is afraid, and feels forsaken by God; he is ignorant of the day and hour; he will not permit himself to be called “Good Master”; he prays to the Father like a man, and is subject to all human emotions, even anger, and to mistake with reference to his disciples.

The whole art of the presentation is apparent. Weiss would make it appear that there are two Jesuses in Mark’s narrative, a divine Jesus and a human Jesus; and if we take the one, he suggests, the other must be left. Mark himself believed in the divine Jesus; the human Jesus, which he places by his side, must therefore be the “earlier” Jesus, to which he has been so accustomed that he cannot away with him even when he would. The astonishing thing, however, is that Mark is entirely unconscious of the straits he is in. He records the human traits, which are supposed to refute the whole portraiture he is endeavoring to draw, with no sense of their incongruity. For, “we must remember,” as Dr. Percy Gardner admonishes us,⁹ “that the Gospels are not mere colorless biographies but collections of such parts of the Christian tradition as most impressed a society which had already begun to seek in the life of its founder traces of a more than human origin and nature.” They are, to put it more accurately, presentations of the salient acts and sayings of Jesus by men who thoroughly believed in the divine Christ, and who wished—as Dr. Gardner says of Paul, the master of two of these evangelists—to “place the human life of Jesus between two periods of celestial exaltation.” Why then did these men, of all men, preserve elements of an earlier tradition which contradict their own deepest convictions of the origin and nature of their Lord? Is it because they lacked

⁹ *Jesus or Christ?* Being the *Hibbert Journal* Supplement for 1909, p. 46.

literary skill to convey the picture they were intent on conveying, and so, as Dr. Gardner puts it, in their attempt to depict the Jesus they believed in, the "human legend was not effaced, but it was supplemented here and there with incongruous elements"? Surely, the day is long since past when our gospels can be treated thus as naïve narratives by childlike hands endeavoring only to set down the few facts concerning Christ which had come to their knowledge. If these elements of "the human legend" were retained, it was, on the contrary, precisely because they presented to the consciousness of these writers no incongruity with their conceptions of the divine Christ; and that is as much as to say that the Jesus whom they were depicting was in their view no less truly human than truly divine. The life of the Master on earth, which they placed between the two periods of celestial exaltation, bore for them the traits of a truly human life.

But as soon as we say this, it is clear that we cannot appeal to the human traits which they ascribe to Jesus as evidence of the existence of an "earlier" Christology than theirs, which looked upon Jesus as merely human. These traits are congruous parts of their own Christology. They are not fragments of an earlier view of Christ's person, persisting as "survivals" in a later view; they are the other half of a consistent christological conception. They supply, therefore, no evidence that there ever existed an earlier Christology than that in which they occupy a necessary place. We may reject, if we please, the Christology of the evangelists, and, rejecting it, insist that Christ was not a divine-human, but simply a human being. But we can get no support for this private, and possibly pious, opinion of our own, from the writings of the evangelists. The human traits, which they all ascribe to Jesus, do not in the least suggest that they, in the bottom of their hearts, or others before them, believed in a merely human Jesus. They only make it manifest that they, and those from whom they derive, believed in a Jesus who was human. The attempt to distort the evidence that they believed in a Jesus who was human, as well as divine, into evidence that they had inherited belief in a merely human Jesus, and unconsciously lapsed into the language of their older and simpler faith, even when endeavoring to commend quite

another conception, does violence to every line of their writings; it is not acute historical exposition, but the crassest kind of dogmatic imposition. Because from the critic's own point of view the doctrine of the "Two Natures" involves a psychological impossibility, when he finds the evangelists presenting in their narratives a Jesus who is both divine and human, he proclaims that there are clumsily mixed here two mutually inconsistent Christologies chronologically related to one another as earlier and later; and because from his own point of view a purely divine Jesus were as impossible as a divine-human one, he pronounces that one of these two warring Christologies which makes Jesus a mere man, the earlier, "historical" view, and that one which makes him divine, a later, "mythical" view. For neither the one nor the other of these pronouncements, however, has he other ground than his own a-priori prejudice. The divine and the human Jesus of the evangelists do not stand related to one another chronologically, as an earlier and a later view, but vitally, as the two sides of one complex personality; and had there been reason to interpret them as chronologically related there is no reason derivable from the evangelists themselves—or, we may add, from the history of thought in the first years of the Christian proclamation—why the human view of Christ's person should be supposed to be the earlier of the two. From all that appears in these narratives, and from whatever other records we possess, Jesus was, on the contrary, from the beginning understood by his followers to be very God, sojourning on earth. In a word, not only is the doctrine of the "Two Natures" the synthesis of the entire body of christological data embodied in the pages of the New Testament; and not only is it the teaching of all the writers of the New Testament severally; but the New Testament provides no material whatever for inferring that a different view was ever held by the Christian community. The entire Christian tradition, from the beginning, whatever that may be worth, is a tradition of a two-natured Jesus, that is to say, of an incarnated God. Of a one-natured Jesus, Christian tradition knows nothing, and supplies no materials from which he may be inferred.

This determination of the state of the case includes in it, it will be observed, Jesus' own self-testimony. We know nothing of

Jesus' self-consciousness, or self-testimony, save as it has been transmitted to us by his followers. The Jesus whom the evangelists have given us testifies to the possession of a self-consciousness which matches perfectly the conception of Jesus which the evangelists are set upon conveying; indeed, the evangelists' conception of Jesus is embodied largely in terms of Jesus' self-testimony. Behind this we can get only by the method of criticism whose inconsequence we have been endeavoring to expose. That "historical Jesus," whom Johannes Weiss (in act of bearing his witness as a historian to the historical validity of the higher Christology) describes as, "so far as we can discern him, seeing his task in drawing his followers into the direct experience of sonship with God, without demanding any place for himself in their piety,"¹⁰ has never existed anywhere except in the imaginations of Weiss and his "liberal" fellow-craftsmen. The evangelists know nothing of him nor does he lurk anywhere in the background of their narratives. The only Jesus of which they have knowledge—or whose figure is traceable in any of their sources—is a Jesus who ranked himself above all creatures (Mark 13:32, one of Schmiedel's "pillar-passages," of which J. H. Moulton speaks as "that saying of uniquely acknowledged authenticity");¹¹ who represented himself as living continuously in an intercourse with God which cannot be spoken of otherwise than as perfect reciprocity (Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:22—a passage which has its assured place in the "discourses-source"); and who habitually spoke of himself as the "Son of Man" (as witnessed in both the "narrative-source" and the "discourses-source"—of course, with all the implications of heavenly origin, ineffable exaltation, and judgeship of the world—divine traits all—which accompany that designation). It is pure illusion, therefore, for Karl Thieme to think of himself as faithful to the self-consciousness of Jesus, or as casting off only an "apostolical theologoumenon (*Glaubensgedanke*)"—which he considers no fault—when he attaches himself to a merely human Jesus and pronounces all that is more than this "mythological."¹² This

¹⁰ *Paulus und Jesus* (1909), 5.

¹¹ *Free Church Year-Book and Who's Who* for 1911, cited in the *Expository Times* May, 1911, 339.

¹² *Z.Th.K.*, XVIII (1908), 431, 442.

merely human "historical Jesus" is a pure invention of the wish that is father to the thought, and would have been, not merely to Paul, as Martin Brückner justly reminds us,¹³ but to all the New Testament writers as well, and to Jesus himself, as depicted by them and as discernible in any sense behind their portraiture—just "nonsense."

We cannot withhold a certain sympathy, nevertheless, from men who, caught in the toils of modern naturalism, and unable themselves to admit the intrusion of the supernatural into this world of "causative nexus," are determined to keep the merely human Jesus, whom alone they can allow to have existed, free from at least the grosser illusions concerning his person with which the thought of his followers has been (in their view) deformed. There surely is manifested in this determination—utterly unhistorical as it is, in both spirit and effect—a strong underlying wish to honor Jesus; to preserve to him at least his sanity—for that is what it comes to in the essence of the matter. A merely human Jesus, who nevertheless believed himself to be God, were a portentous figure on which to focus the admiring gaze of the Christian generations. We may well believe that a saving instinct underlies all the more extreme historical skepticism in the modern attempts to construe the figure of Jesus, as it is somewhat grotesquely phrased, "historically." The violence done to historical verity, for example, in denying that Jesus thought and proclaimed himself the Messiah, receives a kind of—shall we say psychological, or shall we say sentimental?—if not justification, yet at least condonation, when we reflect what it would mean for Jesus, if, not being really the Messiah (and from this naturalistic point of view the whole body of messianic hopes were but a frenzied dream), he nevertheless fancied himself the Messiah and assumed the rôle of Messiah. There may even be pleaded a sort of historical condonation for it; it certainly were inconceivable that such a man

¹³ *Die Entstehung der paulinischen Christologie* (1903), 12: "For the Christ, too, is for Paul, a redemptive-historical personality. Of course, not in the modern sense. The historical Christ in, say, the sense of the Ritchlian school, would have been for Paul, nonsense. The Pauline Christology had rather to do with the experiences of a heavenly being which have, and should have, an extraordinary significance for humanity."

as Jesus is historically authenticated as being—his whole life informed, for example, with a gracious humility before God—could have been the victim of such a megalomania.¹⁴

It is into a perfect labyrinth of inconsistencies and contradictions, in fact, that the assumption that Jesus was a mere man betrays us; and from them there is no issue except by the correction of the primal postulate. The old antithesis *aut Deus, aut non bonus* need, indeed, no longer be pressed; none in these modern days (since Renan) is so lost to historical versimilitude as to think of charging Jesus with coarse charlatanry (cf. Matt. 27:63). But his integrity is saved only at the cost of his intelligence. If none accuse him of charlatanry, there are many who are ready to ascribe to him the highest degree of fanaticism, and a whole literature has grown up in recent years around the matter. There is, indeed, no escape from crediting to him some degree of "enthusiasm," if he is to be considered a mere man. And this, let us understand it clearly, is to ascribe to him also, when the character of this "enthusiasm" is understood, some degree of what we are accustomed, very illuminatingly, to call "derangement." It is easy, of course, to cry out, as Hans Windisch, for example, does cry out, against the antithesis "Either Jesus Christ was mentally diseased, or he was God-man," as "frightful and soul-imperiling."¹⁵ It is that; but it offers us, nevertheless, the sole possible alternatives. Shall we not recognize it as a delusion which argues mental unsoundness when a mere man proclaims himself God? Even D. F. Strauss taught us this much two generations ago: "If he were a mere man" says he,¹⁶ "and, nevertheless, cherished that expectation"—the expectation, to wit, of quickly coming on the clouds of heaven to inaugurate the messianic kingdom—"we cannot help either ourselves or him. He was, according to our conceptions, a fanatic (*Schwärmer*)."¹⁷ It is possible, no doubt, sturdily to deny

¹⁴ This point is admirably elaborated by M. Lepin, *Jésus Messie et Fils de Dieu d'après les Évangiles Synoptiques*³ (1907), 163.

¹⁵ *Theologische Rundschau*, May, 1911, 221. He has in view especially Ph. Kneib, *Moderne Leben-Jesu-Forschung unter dem Einflusse der Psychiatrie* (1908), and H. Werner, *Die psychiatrische Gesundheit Jesu* (1907), both of whom press the antithesis.

¹⁶ *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, 80.

that Jesus could have harbored these high thoughts of himself, or cherished these great expectations. But this is flatly in the face of the whole historical evidence. It is undeniable that the only Jesus known to history was both recognized by his followers and himself claimed to be something much more than man, and to have before him a career accordant with his divine being. Nor can this lowered view of Jesus be carried through: neither Harnack, nor Bousset, nor Hausrath, nor Otto has been able, with the best will in the world, to present to us a Jesus free from supernatural elements of self-consciousness.¹⁷ So that it is a true judgment, which Hermann Werner passes upon their efforts to depict a merely human Jesus: "The historical Jesus of the liberal theology is and abides a mentally diseased man—as Lepsius strikingly said, 'a tragedy of fanaticism' (*Schwärmerei*)."¹⁸ If these supernatural claims were "mythical," then either there was no real Jesus, and his very personality vanishes into the myth into which all that is historical concerning him is sublimated, or the real Jesus was the subject of acute megalomania in his estimate of himself.

And here we discover the significance in the history of thought of the new radicalism which has, in our day, actually raised the question—a question which has become a "burning" one in Germany, the home of the "merely human Jesus"—whether "Jesus ever lived." Men like Albert Kalthoff and Karl Kautsky, Wilhelm von Schnehen and Arthur Drews, emphasize the fact that the only Jesus known to history was a divine being become man for human redemption—not a deified man, but an incarnate God. If this Jesus is a mythological figure—why, there is no "historical Jesus" left. The zeal for vindicating the actual existence of a "historical Jesus," which has developed in the circles of German "liberalism" during the past two years, is most commendable. The task is easy, and the success with which it has been accomplished is correspondingly great. But the real significance, whether

¹⁷ These particular names are adduced only because they happen to be those singled out by H. Werner for examination in a striking article entitled "Der historische Jesus der liberalen Theologie—ein Geisteskranker," published in the *N.K.Z.* (May, 1911), XXII, 5, 347-390. He shows in detail that the Jesus of each of these authors presents symptoms of paranoia.

¹⁸ H. Werner, as above, 383-89.

of the attack or the defense, seems to be only slowly becoming recognized, or at least to have been acknowledged by those involved most deeply in the conflict. It lies, however, very much on the surface. Arthur Drews is simply the *reductio ad absurdum* of David Friedrich Strauss. And the vindication of the actuality of a "historical Jesus," against the assault of which Drews has become the central figure, is the definitive refutation of the entire "mythical theory," which, inaugurated by Strauss, has been the common foundation on which the whole "liberal" school has built for two generations. There is, of course, nothing more certain than that "Jesus lived." But there is another thing which is equally certain with it; and that is expressed with irrefutable clearness and force by Arthur Drews when he declares that "the Jesus of the oldest Christian communities is not, as is commonly thought"—that is to say, in the circles of "liberalism"—"a deified man, but a humanized God." It is impossible to sublimate into myth the whole Jesus of the New Testament testimony, the Jesus of the evangelists, the Jesus of all the evangelical sources which can be even in part isolated and examined, the Jesus, in a word, of the entire historical witness, and retain any Jesus at all. The "mythical Jesus" is not the invention of Drews, but of Strauss, and it is common ground with Drews and all his "liberal" opponents. It is a mere matter of detail whether we say with Weinel that the historical Jesus was a mere man, but a man whom "we know right well—as well as if we could see him still before us today, and were able to hear his voice"; or with Pfeiderer, that he was certainly a mere man, but is so bound up with the legends that have grown up about him that we can never know anything about his real personality; or with Drews, that there is no reason for supposing that he ever existed at all: a mere matter of detail, indifferent to history, which knows nothing of any Jesus but the divine Jesus. The advent of the new radicalism into the field of discussion cannot fail, however, greatly to clear the air; the merely human Jesus is really eliminated by it from the catalogue of possible hypotheses, and the issue is drawn sharply and singly: Is the divine-human Jesus, who alone is historically witnessed, a reality, or a myth? *Tertium non datur.*

Thus we are brought to the final issue. The two-natured Christ is the synthesis of the whole mass of biblical data concerning Christ. The doctrine of the Two Natures underlies all the New Testament writings severally, and it is commended to us by the combined authority of all those primitive followers of Christ who have left written records of their faith. It is the only doctrine of Christ which can be discerned lying back of our formal records in pre-written tradition; it is the aboriginal faith of the Christian community. It is the only alternative to a non-existent Christ; we must choose between a two-natured Christ and a simply mythical Christ. By as much as "Jesus lived," by so much is it certain that the Jesus who lived is the person who alone is witnessed to us as having lived—the Jesus who, being himself of heavenly origin and superior to the very angels, had come to earth on a mission of mercy, to seek and save those who are lost, and who, after he had given his life a ransom for many, was to come again on the clouds of heaven to judge the world. No other Jesus than this ever lived. No doubt he lived as man, his life adorned with all the gracious characteristics of a man of God. But he cannot be stripped of his divine claims. We have already had occasion to advert to the gross contradiction which is involved in supposing that such a man as he was could have preserved that fine flavor of humility toward God which characterized his whole life-manifestation and yet have falsely imagined himself that exalted being in whose fancied personality he lived out his life on earth. The trait which made it possible for him to put himself forward as the Fellow of God would have made the humility of heart and demeanor which informed all his relations with God impossible. Our modern humanitarians, of course, gloze the psychological contradiction; but they cannot withhold recognition of the contrast of traits which must be accredited to any Jesus who can really be believed—even on their postulates—to have ever existed.¹⁹ Stand-

¹⁹ "What contradictions must Jesus have united in himself on the basis of the liberal life-picture of him," exclaims H. Werner (*Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift*, May, 1911, p. 389). "He was at the same time humble and proud, acute-minded and weak-minded, clear-sighted and blind, sober-minded and fanatical, with profound knowledge of men and no self-knowledge, clear in his insight of the present, and full of fantastic dreams of the future. His life was, as Lepsius strikingly said, 'a tragedy of fanaticism.'"

ing before this puzzle of his life-manifestation, Adolf Harnack writes:²⁰

Only one who has had a kindred experience could go to the bottom here. A prophet might perhaps attempt to lift the veil; such as we must be content to assure ourselves that the Jesus who taught self-knowledge and humility, yet gave to himself, and to himself alone, the name of the Son of God.

And again:²¹

But it is of one alone that we know that he united the deepest humility and purity of will with the claim that he was more than all the prophets who were before him, even the Son of God. Of him alone, we know that those who ate and drank with him glorified him, not only as the Teacher, Prophet, and King, but also as the Prince of Life, as the Redeemer, Judge of the world, as the living power of their existence—"It is not I that live, but Christ in me"—and that presently a band of the Jew and gentile, the wise and foolish, acknowledged that they had received from the abundance of this one man, grace for grace. This fact which is open to the light of day is unique in history; and it requires that the actual personality behind it should be honored as unique.

In similar vein Paul Wernle, having pointed out that the two elements found in the Gospels are also found in Jesus' own consciousness, exclaims:²²

What is astonishing in Jesus is the co-existence of the super-human self-consciousness with the most profound humility before God. It is the same man that cries, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father, and no one knoweth the Father save the Son," and who replies to the rich young ruler, "Why callest thou me good, there is none good save God." Without the former, a man like us; without the latter, a fanatic.

By his last words Wernle apparently fancies that all is said which needs to be said in order to explain the anomaly, when it is said that Jesus takes up "the rôle of Mediator": we shall no longer be surprised that he claims something on both parts. But the astounding features of the case cannot be so lightly disposed of. When the two elements of it are given each its full validity; when the completeness of Jesus' humility before God is realized on the one side, and the height of his claim reaching to the supreme deity itself, on the other, it is safe to say that such a combination

²⁰ *Das Wesen des Christentums* (56-60 Tausend, 1908), 82.

²¹ *Christianity and History*, E.T., 1896, 37 (German 5th ed., 10).

²² *Die Anfänge unserer Religion*² (1904), 28.

of mental states within the limits of a single nature will be acknowledged to be inconceivable. It is inconceivable that the same soul could have produced two such contradictory states of mind contemporaneously. Could have *produced* them, we say. Should we not add the question whether a single soul could even have harbored such contradictory states? Such contradictory states of consciousness could no more dwell together in one unitary conscious spirit than issue from it as its creation. The self-consciousness of Jesus is, in other words, distinctly duplex, and necessarily implies dual centers of self-consciousness. Only in such a conception of the person can the mind rest. If Jesus was both the Son of God, in all the majesty of true deity, and a true child of man, in creaturely humility—if, that is, he was both God and man, in two distinct natures united, however inseparably and eternally, yet without conversion or confusion in one person—we have in his person, no doubt, an inexhaustible mystery, the mystery surpassing all mysteries, of combined divine love and human devotion. If he was not both God and man in two distinct natures combined in one person, the mystery of his personality passes over into a mere mass of crass contradictions which cannot all be believed; which, therefore, invite arbitrary denial on the one side or the other; and which will inevitably lead to each man creating for himself an artificial Jesus, reduced in the traits allowed to him to more credible consistency—if indeed, it does not directly tempt to his entire sublimation into a highly composite ideal.

It can scarcely be necessary to add that escape from these psychological contradictions, incident to the attempt to construct a one-natured Christ, cannot be had by fleeing to “the discoveries of the new psychology.” It is vain to point, for example, to the phenomena of what is commonly spoken of as “multiple personality” as offering a parallel to the duplex consciousness manifested by our Lord. We need not insist on the pathological character of these phenomena, and their distressing accompaniments, marking as they do the disintegration of the normal consciousness; or on the lack of affinity of the special form of mental disease of which they are symptomatic with the paranoia from which Jesus must have suffered, on the hypothesis that he was no more than a

man. It is doubtless enough to ask what kind of a super-divine nature this is that is attributed to him under the guise of a human nature, which is capable of splitting up in its disintegration into supreme Godhood and perfect manhood as its aliquot, perhaps even as aliquant, parts. If the mere fragments of his personality stand forth as God in his essential majesty and man in the height of man's possibilities, what must he be in the unitary integration of his normal personality? Surely no remotest analogy to such a dualism of consciousness can be discovered in the pitiable spectacle of Dr. Morton Prince's "Miss Beaucamp" and her "Sally."²³ If we have here a merely human personality, in dual dissociation, the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes is eclipsed; the fragments are in immeasurable overplus of the supply.

It may seem more hopeful, therefore, to call in "the new psychology" as an aid to the explanation of the mystery of our Lord's person, when the divine nature is not denied. Even if, however, the original nature be conceived as divine, and the man Jesus be interpreted as a dissociated section of the divine consciousness, which maintains itself in its full divinity by its side, what have we given us but a new Docetism, complicated with a meaningless display of contradictory attributes? A special form is sometimes given²⁴ to this mode of conceiving the matter, however, which, perhaps, should not pass without particular notice. Appeal is made to the curious cases of "alternating personality," occasionally occurring, in which a man suddenly loses all consciousness of his identity and becomes for a time, longer or shorter, practically a different person. Thus, for example, Ansel Bourne, preacher, of Greene, R.I., became suddenly A. J. Brown, confectioner, of Morristown, Pennsylvania, and remained just A. J. Brown for some months with no consciousness whatever of Ansel Bourne, until just as suddenly he became Ansel Bourne again with no consciousness whatever of A. J. Brown.²⁵ In the light of such

²³ Morton Prince, *The Dissociation of a Personality. A Biographical Study in Abnormal Psychology* (1906).

²⁴ As, for example, very recently by D. A. Murray, *Christian Faith and the New Psychology* (1911).

²⁵ The case is described by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (ed. 1908), I, 391-93.

instances, we are asked, what psychological obstacle forbids our supposing that the divine being who created the universe and has existed from eternity as the Son of God became for a season a man with all the limitations of a man? Why may we not, with psychological justification, look upon Jesus Christ as the infinite God "functioning through a special consciousness with limited power and knowledge"? Why not explain the man Jesus, in other words, just as the "alternative personality" of the Second Person of the Trinity? Such purely speculative questions may possess attractions for some classes of minds; but they certainly have no concernment with the Christ of history. The problem which the Christ of history presents is not summed up merely in the essential identity of the man Jesus with the God of heaven, but includes the co-existence in that one person, whom we know as Christ Jesus, of a double consciousness, divine and human. The solution which is offered leaves the actual problem wholly to one side. In proposing a merely human Jesus, with a divine background indeed, of which, however, he is entirely unconscious, it constructs a purely artificial Jesus of whom history knows nothing: the fundamental fact about the historical Jesus is his unoccultated divine consciousness.²⁶

For the same reason the suggestion which has been made²⁷

²⁶ Therefore even the cautious and strictly limited appeal to the phenomena of multiplex personality by J. Oswald Dykes (*The Expository Times*, January, 1906, XVII, 156) is without effect. He says: "I am far from implying that the analogy between the phenomena of the subliminal life, and the coexistence in our Lord of divine and human consciousness is either close or satisfying. The case of incarnate Deity is and must be unique and incomparable. What they do suggest is that within the mysterious depths of a single personality, there may coexist parallel states of spirit life, one only of which emerges in ordinary human consciousness. They may serve to repel the superficial objection that such a dualism is impossible. Within Christ's complex and wonderful constitution, room might be found for a life-activity, verily His own, yet of which He had on earth no human consciousness, or at most, it may be, an intermittent and imperfect knowledge; and, if it were so, the psychology of the human personality has nothing to say against it." The case supposed is not that of the historical Christ.

²⁷ By W. Sanday, *Christologies Ancient and Modern* (1910); further explained in a more recent pamphlet, called *Personality in Christ and in Ourselves* (1911), in which the incarnation is expressly reduced to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Cf. also H. R. Mackintosh, *The Expository Times*, XXI (August and September, 1910), 486, 553.

that the phenomenal Jesus may be allowed to be strictly human, and the divine Jesus be sought in what it is now fashionable to call his "subliminal self," is altogether beside the mark. The "subliminal self" is only another name for the sub-conscious self; and the relegation of the divine in Jesus to the realm of the unconscious definitely breaks with the entire historical testimony. Even if the hypothesis really allowed for a two-natured Christ—which in the form, at least, in which it is put forward, it does not, but presents us with only a man-Christ, differing from his fellow-men only in degree and not at all in kind—it would stand wholly out of relation with the only Christ that ever existed. For the Christ of history was not unconscious, but continually conscious, of his deity, and of all that belongs to his deity. He knew himself to be the Son of God in a unique sense—as such, superior to the very angels and gazing unbrokenly into the depths of the Divine Being, knowing the Father even as he was known of the Father. He felt within him the power to make the stones that lay in his pathway bread for his strengthening, and the power (since he had come to save the lost) rather to bruise his feet upon them that he might give his life a ransom for many and afterward return on the clouds of heaven to judge the world. Of this Jesus, the only real Jesus, it cannot be said that his consciousness was "entirely human"; and a Jesus of whom this can be said has nothing in common with the only historical Jesus, in whom his divine consciousness was as constant and vivid as his human.

The doctrine of the Two Natures supplies, in a word, the only possible solution of the enigmas of the life-manifestation of the historical Jesus. It presents itself to us, not as the creator, but as the solvent of difficulties—in this, performing the same service to thought which is performed by all the Christian doctrines.²⁸ If we look upon it merely as a hypothesis, it commands our attention by the multiplicity of phenomena which it reduces to order and unifies, and on this lower ground, too, commends itself to our acceptance. But it does not come to us merely as a hypothesis. It is the assertion concerning their Lord of all the primary witnesses of the Christian faith. It is, indeed, the self-testimony of

²⁸ Cf. B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel of Life* (1882).

our Lord himself, disclosing to us the mystery of his being. It is, to put it briefly, the simple statement of "the fact of Jesus," as that fact is revealed to us in his whole manifestation. We may reject it if we will, but in rejecting it we reject the only real Jesus in favor of another Jesus—who is not another, but is the creature of pure fantasy. The alternatives which we are really face to face with are, Either the two-natured Christ of history, or—a strong delusion.